

THE

ROCK;

OR,

ALFRED AND ANNA.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

ROCK

OF

ALFRED AND ANNA

VOLUME THE FIRST

THE
ROCK;
OR,
ALFRED AND ANNA.
A SCOTTISH TALE,
IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY A YOUNG LADY.

Her First Literary Attempt.

Lean not on Earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear;
On its sharp point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires.
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

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THE
ROCK

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Printed by J. G. & Co. at the
Printers, 10, St. Paul's Churchyard, London.

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1838.

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THE ROCK;
OR,
ALFRED AND ANNA.

LETTER I.

MISS R. TO MISS HENRIETTA M.

DEAR FRIEND,

I TAKE up my pen, in hopes to divert a melancholy unsocial hour by prattling to you, and in recounting some events to which you are at present an utter stranger.

You doubtless remember, my dear girl, that about two years since my

VOL. I. B mother

THE BOOK; OR,

mother and I went to reside in the country, on some particular accounts with which you are well acquainted.

During our residence there, a much-esteemed friend entreated me to accompany her, on a visit to some relations in the northern part of Scotland; the proposal according with my inclinations, was accepted; having obtained my parents' consent, and made every necessary arrangement, we departed. Nothing material occurring by the way, we arrived in perfect health and safety at the hospitable mansion of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, nephew and niece of my worthy friend.

Having,

Having, after a few days repose, recovered the fatigue occasioned by our journey, a large party, consisting of their relations and friends, were invited to participate with them the pleasure resulting from their aunt's society.

Mirth and conviviality reigned throughout the happy circle: I endeavoured to be cheerful, but in vain; my heart, at that time oppressed with grief, refused every idea of joy, and I sought an opportunity to escape from the gay assembly, in hopes to sooth my mind in solitude.

B 2

I shortly

I shortly after obtained my wish, and, fleeing out at the garden gate, strolled into an adjacent wood, the thick foliage of the trees proving a delightful shade against the noon-day sun. I struck into the thickest part, and for sometime rambled on in pensive sadness, till I had reached its termination, when raising my eyes, my attention was excited by the appearance of an old gothic structure, at no considerable distance; curiosity impelled me to go forward. I soon reached the spot; all was silent as the grave; the gloom of the surrounding objects seemed congenial to my soul: I sat down on a little rustic bench fronting the Castle, for such it seemed,

ALFRED AND ANNA. 5

to contemplate the awful scene before me.

It was still a stately pile, though the unrelenting hand of Time had robbed it of its greatest beauties; it was now become the habitation of the feathered race, who pass to and fro through its broken casements; its battlements thrown down, laid in rude heaps about the frowning building; its towers were decayed and tottering, and if perchance a sudden blast of wind they nod, threatening destruction to the passing traveller, who, looking back, views with wonder and awe the sublime scene.

B 3

Alas!

Alas! said I mentally, how vain and futile are the pleasures of this life, how transitory human bliss! this was once the seat of luxury and grandeur, but, ah! how changed; 'tis mouldering into dust, and, like its once gay inhabitants, is sinking fast into its primitive nothingness; its once haughty lord and humble slave now sleep together in peace; all distinctions forgotten, neither ambitious of the uppermost place, their friendly allies incorporate, and mix with the parent earth.

My meditations were suddenly interrupted by the sound of footsteps; I started; the place was lonely, far from
the

the busy haunts of men; the room I had been contemplating might be the resort of a lawless banditti; should it be those who had discovered me, what had I not to dread, insults worse than death: the thought was madness. I clasped my hands, and raised my supplicating eyes to Heaven, turning at the same time with precipitation, in order to fly, my foot slipped, and I fell, overcome with terror—I soon lost in insensibility all idea of danger.

On opening my eyes, I found myself reclining in the arms of a venerable old man; he gently placed me on the bench, and seating himself beside me, spoke in the softest accents of pity.

and compassion. I told him my alarm; he smiled at my terror, assuring me I was perfectly safe, by his persuasive manner dissipating all my fears.

His dress was a long woollen gown, fastened round his waist with a leather belt; his snowy beard descending to his breast, whilst his countenance, open and benignant, bespoke a soul replete with every virtue, untainted, unsullied by the follies of a vicious world.

Our conversation now turned on the Castle; I expressed a wish of knowing to whom it belonged; he replied, he believed to Government; but (continued

nued he) if you are desirous of knowing the reason of its present desolate appearance, and will favour me with your company to my humble cell, about a quarter of a mile distant, I will there put into your hands a small manuscript, containing the history of its once happy possessors, which I found in one of my rambles over the Castle. When I was so unfortunate as to alarm you, I was returning from the chapel on the eastern side, where I daily go to offer up my prayers to Heaven at the foot of the altar; there I spend whole hours in meditation, without fear of interruption.

He paused, seemingly out of breath

with talking; I consenting to his request, we rose, and walked on in silence; he led me, by a narrow winding path, down a steep declivity to the bottom of a rock, in the side of which, formed by nature, and improved by art, was a cavern, consisting of two apartments; in the inner was a bench, hewed, you would suspect, by Nature's chissel out of the solid stone; a sort of couch, composed of swelling moss and small fibrous roots. From one corner of the outer trickled a pure spring, which crept with a bubbling moan along the channelled floor, till its healthy current was collected into a basin, rudely scooped from the ground. On the edge of this little receptacle

receptacle lay chained a bowl, and
over it stood an antique worm-eaten
table. On the left, opposite gate of
the wall you discern, rudely carved in
large characters, the huge but mean-
ingful admonition, VANITY OF VAN-
NITIES! ALL IS VANITY!

The hermit, for such he was,
brought me the monastery, offering
me at the same time some fruit by way
of refreshment after my walk; he told
me he had lived there near fifty years,
secluded from the world, enjoying the
blessings attendant on a calm and
peaceful life.

Finding by my watch I had been

out near two hours, I arose to depart, returning him my grateful acknowledgements for his kindness; he accompanied me to the entrance of the wood, where, bestowing on me his blessing, he departed.

On my return, I found, to my great satisfaction, no one had missed me. Early in the evening I retired, under pretence of a violent pain in my head, to peruse the tale, which I shall transcribe for your amusement, and send in letters every convenient opportunity. With sincere wishes for your recovery, I remain your affectionate friend,

your friend, I do not know you yet E. R.

LETTER

LETTER II.

THE ROCK; OR, HISTORY OF ALFRED
AND ANNA.

IN the year 1280, when cruel war
desolated the kingdom of Scotland,
and party feuds created civil broils
among the chieftains, Lord Dun-
combe, the head of a great clan, re-
tired from the tumult to a Castle he
possessed in the northern part, near
the sea, which for size and strength
was scarcely to be equalled; thither
he carried his wife and one son, about

two years old, attended by all his faithful vassals.

Sixteen years he was permitted to enjoy his vast domain in peace; which time he spent in instructing Alfred, his only child, a youth possessed of every amiable quality that could endear him to his parents, and make him beloved and respected by every denomination of people; his days had glided on in peaceful serenity till the age of eighteen, when Malcomb, a haughty neighbouring chief, envious of Lord Duncombe's vast possessions, commenced hostilities against him, who, to avoid the danger of a siege with which he was threatened, assem-

bled

bled his numerous vassals, determined to head them, and meet his insolent foe.

Alfred entreated, in the most dutiful and respectful terms, to accompany his father to the field; his request was granted with pleasure by the old warrior; all hands were busied in making the necessary preparations. Too soon, alas! the fatal day arrived on which they were to depart for the field of battle. Ah! what pen can describe the heart-rending anguish of Lady Duncombe on being separated from her beloved husband and son. She seemed to have a sad presentiment that it was the last time she should be-

hold

hold her dear Lord; thrice they bade her adieu, and as many times her cries recalled them. "One more embrace," she exclaimed, "and then thou shalt depart." Claspings them alternately in her arms, she softly said, "O God, protect them from every danger." At length, with hearts oppressed with grief, they tore themselves from this beloved object, mounted their horses, and proceeded at the head of their numerous vassals to meet the foe.

In a couple of days, by easy marches, they reached the field of battle; the enemy lay encamped so near, that from the outposts the passing of the

the watch was heard. Orders were issued for the next day's attack, and all the troops were under arms. The night being mild and serene, Alfred left his tent: his mind, an utter stranger to emotions of fear, employed itself in thoughts divine; humane compassion for his fellow creatures moved his soul: he viewed with anxious eye the long-extended camp, sighed, and broke forth into the following soliloquy:

How many brave and worthy men,
whose hearts beat ardently for honour,
ere to-morrow's sun shall set will sleep
in death! How many valiant spirits,
through a wreck of wounds, will pour
themselves

themselves into eternity! How many widowed eyes must weep! How many orphans groan beneath adversity! Oh, cursed ambition, a foolish name for avarice! Unlawful wish for other men's fair honours and possessions! Bane of all felicity! Destroyer of every tie, both human and divine, what havock dost thou make among mankind! What horrid slaughter stain thy fallen crest! Ere once the sun shall circle us, the sorrowing Angel who enrols the day will dip his pen in blood, in spoil, in desolation! But an all-seeing, almighty Providence permits these errors of mankind, and perhaps permits them in compassion to the dying! Perhaps it is a mode of clemency

clemency—protest, a clemency which
call in thousands of men from misery,
shortening their calamities, and lead-
ing them into realms of never-fading
bliss.—Good Lord, thy will be done!

Early as the dawn, the army take
the field, and heralds pass to call the
fees to battle. The action commences
—in a short time all is horror and con-
fusion—the groans of the wounded
and dying are overpowered by the
din of arms. Long did young Alfred
fight by his father's side, often shield-
ing his dear body from the numerous
weapons aimed at it; but language is
inadequate to express his agonising
sensations on seeing the enemy's sword

pierce

pierce his father's bosom. He caught him in his arms, and conveyed him in an instant to his tent; but, alas! vain were his tender cares, his father's eyes were closed for ever—he slept the sleep of death.

Frantic with his loss, Alfred flew back to the scene of action, and endeavoured to encourage his soldiers with the hope of conquest—"Come, my brave friends," he cried, "follow me: let us revenge on the heads of these villains the death of our beloved lord; and my ever to be lamented father." Thus saying, he sprang forward among the thickest of the foe, followed by his faithful adherents, cutting;

cutting down all before him. The enemy, surpris'd by the sudden assault, fled with precipitation.

Alfred, hurried on by the desire of revenge, pursued them for some time ere he perceived that he was alone: he would have retreated, but it was too late. The pursued returned, surrounded, and endeavoured to disarm him; but determined to die, rather than be taken prisoner, he bravely resisted for some time all attempts to that purpose, performing with his single arm prodigies of valour, till at length, covered with wounds, and overpowered by numbers, he was bound and conveyed in triumph before

before the now victorious army, to the castle of Malcomb; the remaining part of his troops having laid down their arms.

On arriving at the domain of his conqueror, he was fettered and cast into a noisome dungeon, there to await the punishment which the tyrant Malcomb, to whom his hard fate had made him captive, might choose to inflict.

Alfred being left to his own sad reflections, deplored in heart-piercing accents the death of his father, and unhappy destiny of his mother—What, alas! would now become of her, no one to sooth her sorrows, and protect
her

her from the violence of an enemy, whose breast was an altar brought to virtue and humanity. Quite overcome by grief and despair, he sunk on the cold damp earth, where he remained some hours in a state bordering on insensibility.

The guard who brought him his daily allowance, consisting of a small loaf and pitcher of water, humanely recovered him from his swoon, afterwards cleansing and binding up his wounds, of which he in a short time recovered. He several times attempted to gain a knowledge of his fate, but his guard, though benevolent, was

true

true to his trust, and ever remained impenetrably silent.

Alfred had continued in this dismal situation near a month, his mind all this time tortured by the cruel pains of incertitude. When one day groping about his dark and dreary abode, by way of exercise and amusement, he happened to stumble, and endeavouring to save himself from falling, his hand struck with violence against the wall, which he thought sounded hollow; he tried it again, and felt certain there was some passage or cavity; this gave him hopes of life and liberty, and he determined, if possible, to effect his escape.

LETTER

LETTER III.

ACCORDINGLY, not expecting his guard till the following morning, he went to work with a snub-nose knife he providentially had in his pocket. The prospect of liberty inspiring him with additional strength, in about three hours he had picked away the artificial wall, it proved only a light kind of plaster mixed up with fine sea gravel, but so curiously coloured, that, had it not been for the accident just now mentioned, it in all

probability never would have been discovered: behind he perceived a small door, but so fastened with bolts, long since grown rusty, that at first he despaired of accomplishing his purpose: perseverance, however, at length made it give way to his efforts. By a faint glimmering light received through a hole in one corner of his dungeon, he discovered a few broken steps: he descended, and gained a narrow winding passage, and in a very short time found himself enveloped in total darkness—he stopped a minute, irresolute whether to proceed or return: but certain that no state could be more wretched than that he had

for that time, and the king, who was
 then at the court of the emperor, was

in the midst of a great and glorious

and magnificent triumph, and he

was then at the height of his power

and the height of his glory, and he

was then at the height of his power

and the height of his glory, and he

was then at the height of his power

and the height of his glory, and he

was then at the height of his power

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and the height of his glory, and he

day at length closed, and he quitted the subterraneous passage, bending his course towards the sea, about a quarter of a mile distant. On reaching the beach, he stopped a moment, and cast his eyes over the vast waste of waters, which were greatly agitated. Shortly after, the moon became obscured by thick black clouds, the wind howled dismally, the bulky billows rose to a tremendous height, portending a dreadful storm; and now the rain descended in torrents on his defenceless head, obliging him to seek shelter from the furious elements—a flash of lightning shewed him a small cavity in the side of a rock—he entered, overcome by fatigue and want of food.

Deep

Deep thro' the aerial vaults the Thunder fell,
And forked lightnings darted from either pole;
Now (the dire clash Elements begun)
From the æthereal space, the silver Moon,
Cloud-wrapt retiring (flashed in the Sight),
Hidg'd all Waters up to Chaos and to Night.

He was sitting painfully ruminating
on his past misfortunes, when a foot-
step alarmed him—in a moment after
a man entered, bearing a light.—
Alfred retreated to the farther end of
the cave, in hopes of not being dis-
covered; but vain were his efforts,
the rattling of the chain about his leg,
which he had dragged with him from
the dungeon, caused the stranger to
start, who, looking around, walked
hastily towards the spot from whence

the night of the 14th, and though he perceived something in the darkness, holding the dark side of the lantern towards himself, the light shone full in Alfred's face.—"Great God!" he exclaimed, "what is it I see?—sure my senses deceive me; it cannot be Alfred, the son of my dear deceased Lord."

"Yes, it is that wretched being called Alfred," he replied, "but if I mistake not the voice of the person who seems to take an interest in my fate, 'tis that of Baron Fitzersborne."—"The same," replied the man, throwing down the lantern in a transport of joy, and embracing his knees. "But how comes it that my Lord is in this ignominious situation,

The Baron, on being apprized of Alfred's condition, immediately ordered the physician of the mansion, who had been delivered in place by the King, through happily the light air and fragrance opened his wallet, producing a cold chicken and a bottle of wine, a small quantity of which he poured down the exhausted Alfred's throat, which greatly revived him, and enabled him to eat a tolerable supper, after which the Baron with a small file he found

manely laid about him, released Alfred from his galling chain, who, thanking him for the ease he had bestowed, demanded by what miraculous means he had escaped death; for sure he was, he had seen him fall among the slain—Sighing deeply, the Baron thus began :

“A few minutes after our gracious Lord, your Sire, fell, I received an arrow in my body, which laid me low: how long I remained in that situation I know not—when suddenly awaking from this death-like sleep, I found myself on a bed of straw, an aged man and woman weeping over and endeavouring to recover me—I would have thanked them, but was unable
through

through loss of blood. The old man knelt down by my side, and with extreme tenderness extracted the dart—after which he applied his lips to my wound, and sucked it a considerable time, in order to cleanse and eradicate any venom remaining from the iron with which the dart was pointed. Then chewing some herbs, laid them on, binding it down tight. He shortly after left the room, having previously administered a cordial, which revived, and at the same time composed my spirits, lulling me into sweet forgetfulness.

“Not to trouble you with particulars, they continued their kindness

and

C 5

and in the course of three weeks I was perfectly recovered.

After thanking them my most grateful acknowledgments, I begged they would inform me by what extraordinary means I had escaped the fate of my fellow soldiers.

The venerable old man having wiped away the tear that trickled down his furrowed cheek, replied, that hearing of the defeat, he had gone out in search of an only son, who had entered as volunteer in the service of Lord Duncombe—that he had found him among the slain, but put recovery: having shed the tears of tender affection

CHAPTER IV.

afflicted over his poor state, and
informed him of the state of his
affairs, he was struck with
a heart overflowing with love, and
ever bent on the redemption of
for sinners to the very depths of
tribulation, he thought of me, and
close examination, though he
carved some signs of his
ly binding up my wound, he carried
me to his cottage, where by the mirac-
ful assistance of God I had recovered.
—Thus ended the old man's recital.

"I thanked the good old couple for
all their kindness, telling them at the
same time, I must soon leave their
hospitable dwelling in search of Lord

Alfred. Accordingly, in a few days I set off, being well supplied with provisions through their generosity. Nothing material happened during my journey, till the violence of the storm obliged me to take shelter in this rock, where I have happily and most unexpectedly found my honoured Lord, of whom I was in quest."

The Baron having finished, Alfred related all the events which had occurred since the death of his father.

The storm not abating, the Baron took up the lanthorn, and with Alfred proceeded to examine their apartment—it was large; in one corner they

they perceived a small cavity, which made them imagine there might be other recesses in the rock. The Baron was seized instantly with the idea, that it might prove a place of shelter for his Lord—animated by the thought, he determined to enter and explore the passage, though so low as to oblige him to creep on all fours—Alfred followed: they had not proceeded far ere they perceived the aperture was considerably higher, and in a few minutes found themselves in a high-vaulted chamber—having proceeded to the end, they entered a narrow passage, of which they could see no termination. A death-like stillness prevailed, rendered

ed

the rock; or,

ed more terrible by being sometimes
interrupted by the hollow sighs of
the wind along the dark crevices; but,
seeing their light nearly extinguished,
they were obliged to return; deter-
mining, however, the first opportunity
to come better supplied and finish
their search.

LETTER

ALFRED AND ANNA.

will be a child of my own
 and I shall be able to
 say it is my own child
 and I shall be able to
 say it is my own child
 and I shall be able to
 say it is my own child

THEY had, during the time that
 passed, vent out and quickly brought
 ed with some work, gathered round
 the house and garden which were in
 great condition about the cottage rock;
 likewise a bundle of dry leaves he
 had happily discovered in one of the
 small recesses on the outer side of the
 rock, opposite to a wall which from
 which he supposed the leaves had been
 drifted: having conveyed every thing
 into the inner chamber, he at length
 with great pains kindled a fire, which
 proved

proved a very desirable acquisition, their limbs being drenched with wet, and benumbed with cold, for it was the latter end of autumn. Seating themselves by the blazing embers, Alfred consulted with the Baron on the best method of reinstating himself in his father's possessions. After much debate, it was at length agreed, that on the following day the Baron should go to Lady Duncombe, and if she still survived and continued in possession of the Castle, to inform her of Alfred's escape and present place of concealment.

Having thus determined, they stretched themselves on the cold stone, and

and endeavoured in sleep to lose the remembrance of their sorrows; but in vain they courted repose; it fled far from them, and they passed the night in a state of anxiety hardly supportable.

No sooner had the bright beams of Aurora gilded the Eastern horizon, than they awoke; and having made a short repast, the Baron prepared to depart; Alfred accompanied him to the extremity of the outer cave, where, affectionately embracing each other, they separated; the Baron on his embassy, Alfred back to his solitary cell, meditating on the vanity of all sublunary things.

Oh!

“Oh!” exclaimed he, shaking his forehead, what a delusive phantom is Happiness: how often does she appear, as it were, within our grasp, only to make us feel the more acutely our presumptuous folly, in supposing her an inhabitant of this terrestrial sphere. I, alas! have too sensibly felt, that nothing in this world is real but misery, the rest is mere imagination. Did not I, but two months ago, think myself the happiest of human beings; blest with the best of parents, with friends, with fortune; heir to a vast domain, surrounded by vassals, attentive to my looks, eager to prevent my very wishes, loved by some, courted by all? I, this seeming happy being.

One night Happiness presented
 herself to me in the form of Liberty.
 Liberty I attained, but am as far from
 happiness as ever. A lightning-bolt
 midnight warning, showing the light
 of day, obliged the wanderer, as
 usual.

hide myself in rocks and holes. — O man! the noblest work of nature, why was he created? why endued with reason? was it to be miserable?

In this wretched state of reflection, did Alfred pass most part of the day; till Morpheus, in kind compassion to his sufferings, shed his balmy influence over him, and lulled him into sweet forgetfulness. In this blessed state we will leave him, and follow the Baron on his journey to the Castle:

The morning was serenely fine, no vestige of the last night's storm remained; the birds in cheerful melody hailed.

hail'd the happy morn, and thank'd
first distinguishing acknowledgments
to the supreme Dispenser of all things,
when the Bornea sea, forward on his
journey: while he paused, to consid-
er which of two paths he should
pursue; whether that to the right,
which led along a vast chain of rocks
into a deep valley; or the narrow
one to the left, leading to a large for-
est; at length he determin'd on the
latter, where he thought himself less
liable to a discovery: he soon reach'd
it, and struck into the middle of the
path himself.

He travelled all day, without stop-
ping, except to gather some wild fruits

to satisfy his hunger, towards some-
thing distant courage caught his eyes,
though much fatigued by his journey,
and scarcely able to support himself, yet
inspired by hope, he thought he
might gain the much-wished-for spot,
erast was enveloped in the shades of
night. Accordingly he continued his
speed, and, in about an hour, reached
the humble dwelling, but so exhausted,
he had scarce power left to knock
and crave admittance. The door was
opened by an elderly woman; in a
few words he told his necessities: the
good creature, in whose breast was
implanted all the tender feelings of
humanity, kindly bade him enter, and
refresh his wearied limbs.

And then, when the old woman
entered, with a countenance
that had been accustomed to
see her with a countenance
that she returned him with a
look of kindness and sympathy,
and a finger pointed to the door
though never to the door, and
he followed her with a look
in his face, so all the time
requested heavily to speak, which
he did, and with a cup of
ale, which the good old woman
for warmth of his heart, begged, in hope
it would cheer his guest, quickly re-
vived him.

And then the old woman
brought him a bowl of
minstrelsy, and when he had
drunk of it, he said to her, "When

When supper was ended, they seated themselves around the social fire; when his benevolent host, prompted by good-natured curiosity, asked him what chance led him through the forest, and whither he was going? The Baron replied, he was a poor peasant, travelling towards the Castle in hopes of employment. — “Towards the Castle!” exclaimed he in great astonishment; — “What! do you not know that it is taken?” — “Taken!” repeated the Baron, with great emotion; “no; I knew it not:” and, endeavouring to suppress his feelings, desired his host to relate all he knew concerning the affair, which he accordingly did in the following manner:

“The

ALFRED AND ANNA.

The Castle belonged to Lord Dancombe, who lived happy in it with his lady several years, respected and beloved by all his vassals; they had one son— Oh! exclaimed the good old woman, interrupting him, while the tears in quick succession chased each other down her pallid cheek; “he was the sweetest babe—yes, these paps had the honour of giving suck to Alfred; he was so good, so humble, he never thought it beneath him to come and see how his poor old nurse did.” Here, being violently agitated, she paused, and her husband proceeded in his narration.

Vol. I. B

by "A dispute happening between our Lord and the haughty Malcom, the latter immediately waged war with us; our honoured Lord fell in battle, and it is not known what became of Alfred; the Castle has since been taken, and our dear Lady made prisoner." What the Baron felt at this last piece of intelligence is easier imagined than described: he remained for some time silent; then hastily demanded of his host, whether the vassals of the late Lord were satisfied with the conquest? "So far from it," he replied, "that, were they ascertained of Alfred's existence, they would one and all

all arm in his defence, and shed their last drop of blood to reinstate him in his rights, and release their beloved Lady."

The Baron, finding them friends to the cause, immediately discovered himself. What language can express the astonishment and joy of these worthy peasants, on finding their guest to be Baron Fitzarborne, and to hear from his lips that Alfred yet lived.

"Oh!" exclaimed the good old woman, clasping her hands together, "then I shall yet see him; these eyes will once more behold my darling

Alfred; I shall yet live to see him crush his enemies, and, with my dear lady, inhabit the Castle of his ancestors."

The night being far advanced, they conducted their noble guest to a little room up stairs, neatly furnished by the bounty of their foster child, where, wishing him a good night, they retired to their own lowly couch, and, wrapt in each others arms, sunk to rest. We will now leave them to enjoy that calm, undisturbed repose which conscious innocence can alone bestow, and return to the solitary Alfred.

LETTER

LETTER V.

ABOUT sun-set he awoke, and finding himself much refreshed, though very cold and hungry, he arose, and went out in search of fuel; likewise in the hope of obtaining something whereby he might prolong his wretched existence. At the entrance of the forest he gathered some wild berries, and made up a large bundle of wood; as he returned he picked up some shell-fish, which the last night's storm had thrown upon the beach, and for

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which

which he returned his most grateful acknowledgements to the Almighty. He filled the horn cup, left by the Baron, from a pure spring, which gushed with impetuous force from the top of the rock down its craggy side, falling, with a mournful noise, into the deep. Alfred being thus laden, entered the cave, and busied himself in carrying his store of provisions and wood into the inner apartment, where, having kindled a fire, he sat down to his solitary meal.

The cravings of appetite being satisfied, he bethought himself of prosecuting his search through the cave, which the Baron and himself had commenced

menaced the night before; taking a lighted stick, for, alas! he had no oil for the lamp, he proceeded to the narrow passage before mentioned; after several turnings and windings, he found himself at the end; in vain he looked around for another opening—all appeared solid stone.

He was returning, pensive and disappointed, with his eyes fixed on the ground, when he observed a square stone, neatly fitted in by the hand of art: he stooped down to examine it; it was loose, and with very little difficulty raised; underneath was a vast quantity of bones and other kind of rubbish. This, said he mentally, will

certainly lead to some discovery: accordingly, with all possible expedition, he cleared away the dirt, which done, he perceived a trap-door; he essayed to open it, but in vain, for it was well secured on the inside with bolts; but finding it in many parts decayed and worm-eaten, he thought, could he make a hole sufficiently large to pass his arm through, he might by that means be enabled to unfasten the bolts: this, with much labour, he at length accomplished, as they were very rusty, and did not appear to have been opened for many years; lifting up the door, he perceived a narrow flight of steps; determined, if possible, to unravel the mystery of these recesses in

the

the rock, he took his light, and began hastily to descend, when a hollow groan invaded his ear; he stopped awhile to listen, but all was silent; thinking he must have been mistaken, he was proceeding onward, when one still more deep than the first, followed by another, engaged his attention: his blood grew chill, he could scarce respire, and paused for a moment, irresolute whether to go forward or retreat. Great God! said he, perhaps this proceeds from one still more wretched than myself; let me then hasten to their assistance, and, by endeavouring to alleviate their misfortunes, forget my own.

His generous soul having thus got the better of his fears, he proceeded, and quickly reached the bottom of the stairs, where he rested awhile, listening attentively, but no sound was heard, all was silent as the grave. He entered another passage fronting the staircase, but had not proceeded many yards before he found his progress impeded by a huge door of massy iron: he endeavoured to force the lock; vain the attempt—it resisted all his efforts: he was on the point of returning, when his hand, slipping by chance under the lock, touched a secret spring, and the door instantly opened; in his eagerness to go forward, he forgot the necessary precaution

tion of fastening the lock, to prevent
thrusting; it flew back with rapidity,
and the wind it occasioned extinguish-
ing the torch, left Alfred in total
darkness; astonished, he endeavoured
to find the spring, but, alas! without
a light it was impossible. Over-
whelmed with conflicting emotions,
he threw himself on the ground in
agony of despair, bitterly cursing his
indiscreet curiosity, and bemoaning
his hard fate, which had thus con-
demned him, in the midst of youth
and health, to be buried alive.

He was interrupted, in the midst of
these sad reflections, by deep-drawn
sighs; he arose with precipitation, in

hopes of relief, and groped along, endeavouring to follow the sound; he soon came to the corner of another passage; turning quickly, he perceived a faint glimmering light, and directly after a female form crossed under an archway at a considerable distance, bearing a lamp, which cast a gloomy light around her. Alfred pursued the phantom, but oft, in the various intricacies of the cavern, lost sight of her: he called to her, but in vain; she only flew the more rapidly from him: again she appeared to his longing eyes; he followed, and found he gained ground considerably; redoubling his speed, he was presently near her, when faintly screaming, she drop-

ped the lamp, and Alfred was again envelopped in darkness: he, however, followed the sound of her footsteps; and, after several turnings and windings, again perceived a light; it increased, and the figure once more appeared; it was again lost, but the light being still visible, he found no difficulty in proceeding.

Suddenly a voice exclaimed, "Save me! Oh save me, my dearest mother!" At that instant he perceived, through an archway, two females, one about the middle age, sitting in an arm chair; the other apparently fifteen, standing by her. "Save you, from what, my dear child?" said the elder

62 THE ROCK; OR,

elder lady—“Oh!” cried she, as Alfred at that instant appeared, throwing herself into her mother’s arms, and pointing towards the opening, “there! there! do you not see him?”—Directing her eyes towards the place to which her daughter pointed, she with astonishment and surprise beheld Alfred.

Rising from her seat, and taking the lamp from off her table, she advanced towards him.

Throwing himself at her feet, he entreated her not to be alarmed, as from him she had nothing to apprehend; he being a poor unhappy stranger

stranger who by accident had entered the vaults—that seeing her daughter, he had followed her in hopes of information, but in vain, for through fear she had baffled all his efforts.

Raising him, she desired he would enter her apartment, and inform her by what means he gained an entrance into the Cavern—"For, alas!" continued she, "I know of but one, and that is from the Castle."

Alfred entered, and advancing towards Anna, for that was the name of the young female, would have apologized for having thus terrified her, but was utterly incapable. No sooner did

did he behold her lovely countenance
than he was fixed to the spot with
wonder and admiration. In vain he
effayed to speak; the words died
upon his lips, and he retired to the
other end of the vault silent and
abashed.

Her faultless shape appear'd with ev'ry Grace,
While Beauty sat triumphant in her Face:
Her Hair the palest Brown, in Ringlets flow'd,
And Charms beyond the reach of Art bestow'd:
Her Forehead white as Snow, her radiant Eyes
The bright celestial Blue that paints the Skies:
A guiltless blush her blooming Cheeks disclose,
The native Tincture of an opening Rose:
Her Aspect open, artless and serene,
Reveal'd the spotless Mind that dwelt within.

The

The mother of the young lady repeating her question, he sat himself down on a miserable couch, and prepared to give her the wished-for information.

Accordingly he began the history of his misfortunes; but on coming to that part which mentioned the war with Malcomb, he was interrupted by a deep sigh proceeding from the elder lady: raising his eyes, he saw she was pale and faint; he arose instantly, caught her in his arms, or she would have fallen to the ground, and supported her, while Anna in breathless agitation ran for water: she however quickly recovered, and thanking

Alfred

Alfred for his kind attention, said she was better; at the same time desiring him to proceed in his narration.

He, therefore, recommenced his little history; tears of sympathy and compassion fell from the lovely eyes of Anna at the mention of his father's death, and his own imprisonment; joy animated her intelligent countenance when he related to them his wonderful escape from the Castle, and the storm which obliged him to take shelter in the rock:—"That storm," continued he, "which I then thought the greatest misfortune, has proved to me a blessing; since by its means I have

have become acquainted with you and your amiable daughter."

Here he paused, and received their thanks for his politeness.

A silence of some minutes ensued, which was broke by the elder lady's exclaiming—"Great God! how inscrutable are thy ways!" Turning to Alfred, she continued, "Then thou knowest not, young man, that the very place in which thou hast sought shelter from the malevolence of thy enemy has a communication with the chain of vaults that run under the Castle? Nay, start not, (for Alfred turned pale, and with an involuntary motion
rose

rose from his seat) you are perfectly safe; for I am convinced the owner of the Castle knows it not, or he would have been fearful I should escape, and by that means have disappointed his malice, as by his diabolical machinations I and my much-loved child have been for many years buried alive in these gloomy recesses."

At the close of this speech Alfred manifested great astonishment.

"You are no doubt anxious," continued she, "to know the reason of my confinement here: the confidence you have reposed in me demands a similar return. My life, alas! has been, and still continues replete with misery:

I am

I am a wretched prisoner, confined by one who ought most to have protected me. The night is now however too far advanced, and I find myself too ill to commence the history of my sorrows; but if you will favour me with your company to-morrow evening, I will then, if equal to the task, relate to you a tale of woe—of horror."

Alfred arose, and thanking her for her condescension, said he would retire. They both attended him with a light, and in a very short time discovered the door. Alfred took up the stick which had served him in place of a torch, lighted it, and quickly

ly

ly finding the spring, opened the tremendous door, whose sudden shutting had caused in his bosom such a variety of painful emotions, and which had finally ended in an event as unhoped as it was unexpected and agreeable.

He pointed out to them the staircase by which he had descended, and gained admittance into those dreary caverns: at the same time mentioning the groans he had heard. The elder lady said she imagined they must have proceeded from her, as she often vented her grief, and by that means eased her almost bursting heart.

Wishing

Wishing each other a calm night's repose, they separated. The ladies returned to their apartments, while Alfred pushed his crowd up stairs; he soon gained the top, when, throwing the trap door, he walked pensively back to his solitary cell, reflecting all the way on the extraordinary occurrences of the night.

When he reached his habitation he found his fire nearly extinguished; having replenished it, he laid him down, but not to rest—the lovely Anna engrossed all his thoughts—how oft did her beautiful form and amiable tenderness to her mother recur to his imagination; her tender solicitude,
and

and the sweet enchanting look of gratitude she gave him on her dear mother's recovery, all tended to inspire love and hope—with what rapture did he dwell on the fond idea!

In the morning he arose unrefreshed, made a short repast, went out, gathered some fruits, and made up a bundle of wood in the neighbouring forest for fuel: returned pensive to his solitude, and passed the day in anxious inquietude and perturbation. With what impatience did he await its close! with what rapture did he behold the sable curtain of night overspread the hemisphere! He flew on the wings of love to the trap door, opened it, and

and hastily descending, took with rapidity through the winding passages of the cavern, and was quickly in the presence of the amiable confusion; and

JOHN

The elder lady welcomed him with a melancholy smile—Anna, with tears of unfeigned joy, with timidity she lifted up her sweet blue eyes; but they were instantly cast down when she perceived his ardent gaze, while the deepest crimson of modesty overspread her face and neck.

Alfred withdrew his eyes from the beloved object, on finding they distressed her; turning to her mother, he in the tenderest accents inquired

VOL. II

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how

THE BOOK, &c.

how she loved herself, she replied,
much better, and, desiring him to be
satisfied, with a strong sigh began
the painful recital of her mis-
fortunes.

And she began to tell him of the
many misfortunes which had befallen
her, and how she had been
suffering from the loss of her
husband, and how she had been
suffering from the loss of her
children, and how she had been
suffering from the loss of her
property, and how she had been
suffering from the loss of her
reputation, and how she had been
suffering from the loss of her
life.

LETTER

THE HISTORY OF THE VAGRANT

I am a vagrant, and I am a vagrant.

I am a vagrant, and I am a vagrant.

I am a vagrant, and I am a vagrant.

"I WAS the only child of Lord

Clifton, my parents were fond of me

to excess. I was brought up with my

cousin, the only son of Lord Clifton,

our parents wishing to unite us, if a

mutual inclination took place—that

was finally settled, and we were

loved before we knew the meaning of

the word—we flattered each other

Es

amusement.

amusements. He would gather the sweetest flowers to deck the bosom of his affectionate Matilda; every joy was heightened, every grief lessened by participation.

“ Thus passed our youthful days, happy in each other; we looked not into futurity, or saw the distant storm which overwhelmed and separated us for ever—Oh! happy days of peaceful innocence, never to be recalled, ever to be remembered with regret.

“ At the age of sixteen he declared his love to my parents, and demanded me in marriage: they cheerfully consented. I was sent for—Are you willing,

willing, Miranda, to be united to this youth," said my father. "Unwilling to disguise my feelings, I deeply bowed, and faintly answered, 'Yes.' Taking my hand and joining it with Edmund's, he thus spoke:

"Receive her, my worthy son, and remember that I deliver into your hands my soul's best treasure, my darling child; guard the precious deposit as you ought—be happy, and may every blessing attend you!"

"Oh!" cried Edmund, throwing himself at my father's feet, "when I abuse the sacred trust reposed in me, may I be deemed the most execrable

of villainy, and punishment to the villain
criminal; no, sooner will Edmund
seek to live than seek to love the
amiable, the virtuous Isabella.

"My father tenderly raised him
from the ground, embraced and
kissed him.

"A messenger was immediately
dispatched to his parents with the
happy intelligence, who heartily con-
curring in every measure proposed,
and all parties being content, that day
two months was fixed for the celebra-
tion of our nuptials—all was joy,
harmony, and love!

"The

224

Emotion to his going he threw himself at my father's feet, and embracing his knees, entreated him in the most pathetic manner to consent to our being united before he left me, perhaps for ever; but that was inexorable—'No,' said he, 'the calm blissful joys of love are incompatible with the noisy tumults of miserable destructive war—Go,' continued he, 'assist your father; you will be victorious—you will return crowned with laurels, more worthy and more dear to your Matilda than ever.'

"The fatal morning, so much dreaded by both too soon arrived—the troops were ready, Edmund must depart;

depart: thence he bade me farewell, and he bade me farewell—the last time, clasping me to his throbbing heart! O, Mother! he exclaimed—hold the big drop of anguish rolled down his manly cheek—hold we both forever, alas! I fear for ever! Parting himself from me, he departed in an agony of despair.

“Overwhelmed with sorrow, I fainted, and was in this state of insensibility conveyed to my chamber, where, through the affectionate care of my mother, I quickly recovered my health, but not my happiness, that was fled, never, no, never to return.

in an adjoining room, Love, who was
divorced, but was patient with my wife
Dora, and made proposals of marriage
for me to my father, and yet he de-
clined the honour of his suitors, at
the same time giving him his reasons
for so doing.

"The haughty soul of Malcomb could ill brook the disappointment, especially as it was in favour of what he termed a mere boy. From that time he secretly vowed revenge, and soon after took occasion, upon some trifling account, to break the treaty of peace between them, and laid siege to our Castle; we withstood the attack a considerable

peace was to be obtained; horror-struck by the dreadful intelligence, I swooned.

“When I recovered from this blessed insensibility, gracious God! what a scene presented itself to my view: never, no, never will it be effaced from my memory; my dear indulgent father was pacing the room in the greatest agitation, indignation and pity strongly painted in his expressive countenance; my revered mother kneeling at my feet. O God! what humiliation for a parent! entreating of her child to save her from bondage, to save her husband, and not let her grey hairs go down with sorrow to the grave.

grave.—Could I see the tears flow from the eyes of my beloved parents and know it was in my power to dry them, and not do it?—Ah! no.

“ ‘Rise, Madam,’ said I to my mother, giving her my hand, and at the same time extending the other to my father, ‘dry those tears; could you for an instant suppose that Matilda, through a selfish regard for her own happiness, would forget her duty? No; she will teach this stubborn heart to submit to its hard fate; she will do more—she will endeavour to forget Edmund, and the sigh which now struggles in her breast shall be the last.—Yes, Matilda can die, can give
up

up her faith, her only love, her promised husband, but never can her duty—
 “Do,” continued I, addressing myself to my father, “go to the tyrant, and, if the tears and supplications of an old man cannot soften his adamant heart, tell him that I consent, to save my family from infamous bondage—I consent to be miserable.”

“Overcome with contending passions, I again sunk into insensibility.

“Ere I recovered, my father had left the room, to communicate my sentiments to the victorious tyrant; my mother tried to soothe me by every means in her power, and at length succeeding,

I was to vow for him, at the foot of the altar, eternal love, when my whole soul was devoted to another, what a sacrilegious violation of truth! thus appeared to my burning brain, in the most aggravating colours, all the miseries of my situation. Nature could not sustain, without a dreadful struggle, such accumulated woe: Reason for a moment tottered on her throne, and, rising, I exclaimed, in an agony of distraction,

“O Edmund! must I give you up? must I never see you more? Alas! are all our happy prospects come to this? O Edmund! Edmund! how did you think, when parted from,

Matilda,

Matilda, that you beheld her for the last time, or that she would prove false, renounce you for another, and that other a barbarous enemy? Will you not hate, despise, perhaps curse the wretched Matilda? Grief exhausted by these painful questions, I sunk on the sofa; a flood of tears coming to my relief, a little calmed my agitated spirits.

"Alas!" said I mentally, to what do all these lamentations tend, but to render your beloved parents miserable: reflect a little, remember you have done your duty; that sweet reflection will prove a balm to heal your sorrows; call Reason to your aid, and

THE STORY.

and she will teach you to read, with
calmness and resignation, the lesson that
afforded you by Heaven.

"I could, however, not
and having told them I would have
their friends and their children.

"Too soon, that the intended
ment arrived, when I was to receive
a visit from Lord Malcomb, he came
attended by my father, I wish, but
was scarcely able to support my tot-
tering frame; the writings were drawn
and I was desired to sign them; this
I did with a trembling hand and beat-
ing heart: the day fixed for our de-
parture was the next but one. I heard

all

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In a

on the
pole
which
faded
him
hand
while
I
grasp
horror
countenance
dropped
hence

The

"The short interval between that and the day fixed on for our marriage I passed in endeavouring to collect sufficient fortitude to go through the ceremony with composure.

"The fatal hour came when I was to renounce the man I loved, in order to be united to the one I hated. My senses were again bewildered; dreadful was the conflict between love and duty; but the latter prevailing, I waited with apparent serenity his approach.

"He came—my father led me to him; he took my hand, and I pronounced

neupred the fatal Yes which doomed
me to irrevocable misery.

"Lord Malcomb having restored
every thing to my parents, I, the next
day, bade them a long, a last adieu,
quitted the peaceful asylum of my
infancy, that I never more to return,
and was conducted by my husband
more dead than alive to his Castle,
amid the acclamations of his vassals
and the shouts of his retainers.
The drawing was far from
as we expected and entered the spacious
hall, a great number of gentlemen
the many portraits of our
giving none, we thought I was for
ever that from all those great

LETTER

LETTER VII.

"THE exterior of the building was gloomy, and had more the appearance of a stately prison than a chief's magnificent domain: at least so it was portrayed by my sickening fancy. The drawbridge was let down, and, as we crossed and entered the spacious court, my blood grew chill; but when the heavy portals closed with a harsh grating noise, methought I was forever shut from all those dear connections

tion, whose society alone could render life supportable. I could not but feel our misfortune largely shared.

"I endeavored, however, to conceal, if possible, the true emotions, and contented my heart with resignation; but no longer could I control, with controlling hope, the half, that ever-ready influence which me; I looked round me with surprise, and clasping my hands together, sunk speechless on the ground.

"On recovering, I found myself in my apartment, surrounded by my women; his Lordship soon after came in, and dismissing my attendants, gloomily asked me what I had seen.

in his house so disgusting to cause my sudden fainting? I endeavoured to look cheerful, and replied, the length of the journey, and the fatigue in consequence, added to the regret I felt at being, for the first time, separated from my revered parents, alone had caused my indisposition; adding, a little repose, I doubted not, would entirely recover me.

“He appeared satisfied with my answer, and left me: when he was gone, I gave way to tears, and eased my bursting heart; after which I grew more composed, and determined to submit to my duty with resignation, and endeavour, by a cheerful compliance

pliance with his will, to please him: this I did, nay more, I strive to love him, and banish my fear, and my guilty passion for Edmund from my breast. Alas! vain were my efforts; he was still the savage tyrant, and, by his cruel treatment, repelled every tender sentiment arising in his favour.

“ Naturally of an inconstant temper, possession soon made him indifferent; the passion he had felt for me, and which, at the time, he dignified by the name of love, formed on no virtuous principle, and which had for its foundation only the gratification of his own selfish, brutal appetite; that obtained, he shortly looked upon me as

an encouragement, a bar to his pleasures:—he continually reproached me with want of affection; if I smiled, it was satirical or malicious; if I looked sad, I was committing adultery in my heart: in short, he strove, by every cruel means of which his inventive faculties were capable, to render me the most forlorn and wretched of human beings.

“Some months had elapsed since my marriage, and no letter from my parents; at length one arrived from my dear mother; I opened it with trepidation: in it she exhorted me to persevere in my duty, and cease to remember there ever existed such a person

perlen as Edmund; "for," continued she, "he is no more, he was killed in battle."—I could proceed no farther, my eyes grew dim, an icy shiver seized my heart, and I sank back in the chair in a state bordering on insensibility; not a sigh nor a tear escaped me, but motionless I sat, as if transfixed by the dart of death.

"I remained a long time in this torpid state, but grief at length got the better of astonishment, and I exclaimed in an agony, 'O Edmund! Edmund! and art thou gone for ever! Cruel, relentless Death, to cry of woe a Boyer.—But what a selfish being art thou, Matilda,' continued I, 'is he

not happy? Is he not snatched from this vale of woe to eternal bliss? Bewail him not, for haply he died ignorant of thy perfidy; he knew not Matilda was another's, or misery would have been his portion. Be content, for yet a little while and all thy sorrows will be ended.—Yes, Death, the never-failing friend of the wretched, will, ere long, snatch thee from this vale of tears; and thou, Matilda, will join, in realms of never-fading light, thy Edmund, thy first, thy only love, though forced from thee by the lawless power of a tyrant—Tyrant! did I say—is he not my husband? Yes, the infant I now nourish convinces me he is,

is, and, as such, I ought to love and venerate him."

"I then threw myself on my knees, and addressed a prayer to the Almighty, begging him to grant me a sufficient portion of grace to bear my heavy calamities without repining.

"After this short petition, I arose more tranquil, and looked forward with eagerness and joy to a speedy termination of my sorrows; but, alas! I was reserved for yet greater trials.

"About four months after I was delivered of Anna; I no longer wished for death, my child was a tie

that bound me to life, when I looked on her, and received her innocent caresses, I forgot all my troubles, and no longer thought of her father with revulsion.

Thus five years passed away, during which time nothing material happened, till about the beginning of the sixth year, when, as I was one day sitting in my dressing-room instructing my little Anna, one of my women entered, and delivered me a letter, telling me, at the same time, it was brought by a peasant, who waited for an answer. I opened it, but how was I astonished and terrified when I beheld

held the hand-writing of Edmund, and read the following words :

" * Felice, perjured woman, know that Edmund lives, and lives as cruel the day he first believed the selfish Matilda; no doubt you rejoiced at my supposed death, that you might enjoy uninterrupted happiness in the arms of my rival.—Fondness for the villain, who, by his accursed arts, tore from me my once-glorious Matilda, my wife—you, by every law, divine and human, you are mine, and I will assert my prior right.—Alas! did I say?—Great God! are you not in the possession of another?—Oh, that I had the power to hurt the man!

ster to destruction!—But I forget, I beg pardon, he is your husband, perhaps your beloved—Distraction is in the thought—my brain burns!—Oh! for a cup of the Lethean waters to soothe my perturbed mind, and lull me into sweet forgetfulness!—Was it for this I escaped from bondage, and flew on the wings of love to the arms (as I thought) of my Matilda?—But what agonizing sensations did I experience, when I learnt that she was lost to me for ever, that she had given herself to another—madness seized my brain; agitated by despair, I came hither, determined to hear the fatal truth from your lips. Should every spark of affection for the unhappy Edmund be extinguished

extinguished in your breast, yet let kind compassion plead for a miserable wretch, whose greatest fault is loving to distraction a faithless woman, and induce you to meet me at five o'clock in the adjoining wood; do not fail, for I must and will see you, if it is even in the presence of the happy Malcomb. Dread the consequences of my despair if you deny me this trifling request; one word to the peasant, who may be trusted, signifying your compliance with my request, will make happy the ill-fated Edmund."

THE ROCK; OR,

LETTER VIII.

OVERCOME by horror and surprise, I sat for some time motionless, my eyes fixed on the letter; at length I exclaimed, "Great God! Edmund lives, and lives to curse the day he first believed the faithless Matilda.—Cruel, barbarous man!—but I will not upbraid you; you know not that I did it to save my aged parents from worse than death, from ignominious slavery.—But you will see me, if it is even in the presence of the happy

happy Malcolm! Ah, not that I should not be.—Oh,” continued I, clasping my hands together, “when shall the wretched Malcolm be no more? when shall I lay my aching, overburdened rest, in the cold, dark, silent earth, where the wicked shall be crumbling, and the weary are at rest? yet I will go, I will see him once more, since it will make him happy.”

“Thus determined, I went down and acquainted his friend I would not fail; I could say no more. Lord Malcolm appearing, but hurried back to my apartment—O! first promise! Here her emotions became so violent

at the sad recollection that she fainted."

Alfred and Anna did every thing in their power to recall her to life and reason; but it was a full hour ere she regained her senses.

Heaving a deep sigh on opening her eyes, she gently raised them towards Heaven, and in a pathetic manner exclaimed:

"Look down, great God, with pity's softest eye on a poor breathing particle in dust."

Having

Having thanked Alfred for his attention, she desired to lie down, saying she found herself too much agitated to proceed in her narration; but if he would return on the morrow, though painful the task, she would endeavour to make an end of her sad history.

He retired from their presence, his whole soul filled with love and pity for the fair unfortunates, fully resolved to extricate them from their confinement, though at the hazard of his life.

Early the next evening, according to request, he visited Lady Malcomb, and

she was happy to find it was re-

covered.

Without preface she continued her unhappy story.

"Some time after feeling for the letter, with an intention to re-peruse it, I found to my utter astonishment, grief, and vexation, that it was not in my pocket; terrified, I flew back to the hall, but searched in vain--Alas! it was irretrievably lost.

"If my husband should have discovered it, mademoiselle was in the thought. At dinner I scrutinized his countenance,

countenance, and the placidity of the tones that he was ignorant of the cause.

"The appointed hour came, and I was to see for the last time my Edmund." With trembling steps I descended into the hall—I again met Lord Malcomb, he demanded where I was going?—I replied hesitatingly, having a dreadful head-ache I wanted a walk, in hopes the air would relieve me. He bowed, which I might have taken for a salute, and left me.

"The marble-hearted fiend, who views with apathy the miseries of his fellow

fellow creatures, may condemn my duplicity; but those who are by nature gifted with candid and susceptible hearts, and whose minds are enlarged by a liberal education, will, though free from error themselves, pity the frailties and weaknesses of another. I flatter myself they will drop a tear to the memory of my sorrows, and acknowledge my punishment was more than adequate to my crime—Oh! sure that is too harsh a name. The recording angel, ever compassionate to poor mortality, cannot have registered it as such in the tablets of Heaven; for the Almighty, whose eye penetrates the inmost recesses of the soul,
and

and before whose august tribunal I shall ere long be cited, know the purity of my intentions.

"Agitated to the greatest degree, I proceeded; an icy chillness ran through all my veins as I drew near the forest—I entered—Edmund saw and flew to meet me: But, ah! how unlike the Edmund I once knew—pale, emaciated, his hair discoloured, eyes wild and darting fire.—'O Matilda!' cried he, catching me in his arms, 'do you then pity the unhappy Edmund?'

"Gently disengaging myself, I related in a few words the unhappy circumstances

embraces which had occurred since his departure, entreating him at the same time to compose his spirits, and forget there ever existed such a wretched being as Matilda. 'Forget you,' cried he, 'no, never! Then reclin'd me in his arms, I endeavoured to free myself from his ardent embrace, but in vain—' No,' exclaimed he, 'by Heaven I will not part with you!'—'Will you not?' cried a voice that petrified me with horror, for it was the voice of Malcomb.

" 'In pity,' said I, in trembling accents, 'in pity leave me to my fate, and fly—Oh! fly from the vengeance of my husband.'

" 'Leave

"Leave you," replied Alfred,
 "that, in the hands of a wicked
 tyrant! no, never, I will

"Rah, prentiss, my Lord
 Lord Malcolm, my darling, with
 his sword drawn, "prepared to do
 nothing but try life and family
 revenge."

"Overcome with terror, I saw
 fenlocks at their feet."

"I awoke to new scenes of misery:
 at my side lay the once-blooming
 Edmund, belimed with blood, which
 issued from his numerous wounds,
 the cold damp of death bedewed his
 forehead."

forehead. I clasped his hands in speechless agony; he fixed his closing eyes upon me—O God! never will the horrid scene be effaced from my memory: I saw him sink under the last agony, and heard the groan that is repeated no more.

“ ‘And art thou gone for ever,’ cried I in wild distraction, ‘dear and ever-loved youth? Why! Oh, why did you not wait for the wretched Matilda? Cruel, barbarous tyrant, to crop so sweet a flower, (addressing myself to Malcomb,) is thy brutal revenge gratified? if not, finish the bloody work you have begun: pierce this bosom—think not that I shall shrink from

from the blow; no, on the contrary, I will meet it with pleasure, and bless with my latest breath, the hand which gives me death.

“ ‘Hard-hearted tyrant,’ I continued, ‘will you not grant my request? Know, then, that I hate and detest you, but love and adore him whom your merciless hand has sent to the grave.’

“ ‘No,’ cried the malicious wretch with a horrid smile, ‘even that will not induce me to grant your request; death would make you too happy, and my revenge would not be half satisfied:’ then calling to his attendants,
he

he bade them carry me back to the
Castle.

“Distracted, I threw myself on the
body of my Edmund, and vowed that
nothing but death should separate us;
they came towards me, I screamed,
and clung still closer to the lifeless
corpse, and called on the departed Ed-
mund to save me from the barbarians,
but called in vain; the inhuman Sa-
vages forced me from him, whilst my
tyrant only laughed at my cries, and
mocked my grief. Having conveyed
me to my chamber, they were dis-
missed, and I was left alone with Lord
Malcomb.

“Sitting

“Drawing from his pocket the dagger
I had lost, and then exclaimed, thus

“Vile, detestable woman, had I
not been for this hour, when I was
in the hall, I had been destroyed
by your pretended head-ach; but
having perused its contents, I deter-
mined to watch you, and follow you
privately to the place of rendezvous
there to wreak my vengeance on your
paramour; this I have happily effec-
ted, and now I have but one thing
more to do, then I shall be satisfied;
that is, to punish you as you deserve.”

“Turning from me, he took a cup
from

from off my toilet, and filled it out of a phial with a certain mixture, commanded me to drink it; I, thinking it was poison, received it with pleasure, and drank it off without hesitation, in hopes soon to join my Edmund in a happier state.

“ Shortly after I closed my eyes; and sunk into oblivion; how long I remained in this blessed suspension of thought I know not: on awaking, I found myself stretched on a wretched pallet, my little Anna sweetly sleeping by my side, unconscious of her mother's misery: a glimmering lamp, that stood on a table at some little distance, sufficiently shewed me my

new

new habitation. I found by the provisions and a written paper, that I and my child were doomed to linger on the wretched remains of our coffers in this dreary vault. I threw myself on my knees, and humbly thanked the Almighty for his goodness in fostering me my child as a comfort in my affliction.

"Lord Malcomb every week brings us provisions for our support when he is about to make war with any neighbouring clan, or going a journey, he generally supplies us for a month. The nearest calculation I have been able to make, by passing down with the point of a penknife on the table each visit of Lord Malcomb.

in that I have been educated almost
in these gloomy caverns upwards of
ten years. A short time since I pre-
vailed on him to let me have a few
books; from them I have instructed
my Anna in the rudiments of our
language to the best of my poor abili-
ties.

I have in vain endeavoured to
soften his hard heart in favour of his
unoffending daughter; in hopes, though
I should greatly suffer by the loss, he
would take her to his bosom, and not
permit her to waste her bloom in this
desolate place, because her mother has
been unfortunate. Alas! he is deaf
to my entreaties; and, in order to
crush

erith every day, and continued thus during the funeral of our daughter occasioned by the death of the infant, which was buried in the same place as the child. A high wind at the funeral put out the light, and when we laid the body in the coffin, we were buried in the convent of St. Peter with all the magnificence due to our high birth, and in due proportion to my supposed death. I had not any kind of parting words with those who were following the dreadful intelligence.

“For myself,” continued this much-injured woman, “I have no desire to quit this solitary place; time has rendered it pleasing: my misfor-

times, having quite unfitted me for the world, all my wishes, but one, are concentrated in the grave; that is, to see my child quit this place, and know her happy; then would I shake off this cumbrous load of clay, and fly to join the happy spirit of my departed Edmund!"

Thus the amiable Lady Malcomb finished her unhappy story, which was plentifully watered by the tears of her sympathizing auditors.

LETTER

LETTER III.

THE soul of Alfred was filled with pity at the relation of her misfortunes, but love predominated; when he gazed on the beautiful Anne, and reflected on her hapless situation, bitter anguish wrung his soul; but what were his agonizing sensations, when sad recollection presented to his view his own forlorn and desolate state, convincing him of the impossibility of placing her at present in the condition

to which, by her merit and high birth,
she was entitled.

Rising from his seat, and throwing
himself at the feet of Lady Malcomb,
he addressed her in the following
words:

"Dear Madam, I beseech you, per-
mit me to be the happy instrument of
your wish; let me all-wise pour my
fortunes, by assisting you both from
this dreary, distant shore; though in
present wanderers, I have yet hopes,
from the exertions of my friends, to
be speedily re-established in my pos-
session; I love, I adore your ex-
traordinary daughter; if she can return my
affection,

affection, and your confidence, your future hope of my life, shall be devoted to her, and I will be true to her in me, and the power of the Almighty shall upon me if ever I deceive you."

Lady Margaret having attended him some time, her countenance expressive of astonishment and indignation, at length replied,

"Your generous offer demands all my gratitude, and I accept it with thankfulness and joy."

Alfred said not a word to her conclusion, but, transported, flew to the

Teet of Anna.—“Oh!” exclaimed he,
 “loveliest, best of women, can you
 return my pure and ardent affection,
 can you consent to make me happy?”

“Rise, Sir,” returned Anna, whilst
 the tear of sensibility trembled in her
 eye, and the sweet flush of mo-
 delty overspread her face and neck;
 “I shall ever be my duty to make
 the remainder of my dear mother’s
 life pass in tranquillity; happiness, I
 fear, she never can experience: if, by
 fulfilling her affectionate wish on my
 account, I can give her one moment’s
 satisfaction, be assured I shall consent
 with pleasure.”

“Never

ALFRED AND ANNA.

"Never can I thank the Almighty for his goodness, in bestowing on me such a daughter to comfort my afflicted soul," cried Emily, with a comb, "throwing her arms round Anna's neck, and clasping her to her maternal bosom; "but, O my Anna, let not duty alone induce you to comply with my request, if affection for this amiable youth has no share; let me entreat you to be ingenuous, and not, through a regard for my peace, render yourself and him forever miserable."

"Let not my dearest mother make herself uneasy on my account," replied the tender Anna, returning her

the former's embrace. The elderly
head with its grey hair pressed
her voice faltered, she could pro-
ceed no farther, but her face shone
like in the bosom of her mother.
Alfred kissed her hand with warmth,
and felt himself as happy as their pres-
ent uncertain lot would permit.

Even a momentary gleam of satis-
faction was visible on the countenance
of Lady Maltravers, she embraced and
blessed her children; then falling on
her knees, she, in the most pious
manner, addressed a prayer to the Al-
mighty, entreating him to shield them
from misfortunes, and to prosper

down

down his cheeks, and his eyes on their
guiltless heads.

The night being far advanced, he
first left them to their repose, and re-
turned to his sleeping cell, blessed
with a greater portion of tranquillity
than he had for some time experienced,
but not without previously obtaining
Lady Rebecca's consent, as he was be-
ing them early the next morning to
view once again the blessed light of
Heaven, and breathe the pure air.

He slept not, but spent the night in
anxiously watching for the day, as
sooner was light perceptible, that he
flew, and conducted all that was dear

to him to that part of the cavern he inhabited. Lady Malcolm, though it was the inner chamber, complained much of the cold, and it required a deal of persuasion to induce her to creep after her children through the small aperture to the outer cave, where they had just assisted her to rise, and were supporting her to the mouth of the recess, when the lighted air, though the former was but trifling, proved too much for her feeble frame, and she fainted: having bathed her temples with a little sea water, she recovered, and seating her on a stone in the hollow, they walked out upon the beach.

Anna,

Anna, with innocent freedom, linked her arm within Alfred's, and ere they had gone many paces, stopped; she scarcely seemed to breathe, but stood fixed to the spot with wonder and admiration; her eyes now turned on the world of waters, now on the wide expanse of Heaven, in which many stars were still visible; the sun was glowing and streaked the sky with gold and azure; it appeared to issue from the depth of the sea, gradually enlightening the hemisphere. What a beautifully sublime scene! how awfully impressive on a young and ductile mind! Hard must indeed be the heart that could resist such an Aurora; but our heroine's was infinitely

nichly susceptible. Secluded in infancy, to that moment, from natural light, she had not been able to form any idea of its beauties: her mother had often deplored her daughter's deprivation of the sun, but Anna could not mourn with her: she thought, indeed, it would be pleasing to have a very large lamp instead of their little one, but thought no more: words, then, are inadequate to paint, in just colours, her wonder on beholding the glorious luminary of the world.

Pressing Alfred's hand, "How great, how beneficent a God is ours," said she, "to bestow on us poor mortals such mighty blessings! how infinitely
too

ALFRED AND ANNA.

too short, we are here to render our-
selves by our best endeavours, con-
ferring in the most satisfying degree
such bounty as we can afford.

She looks; Alfred involuntarily
followed her example. He then said to

"Teach, oh! teach me, thou great
First Cause—!" Here her emotions
became so powerful, that utterance
failed, and she sank speechless on the
bosom ready to sustain her; her arms
were still raised, her hands clasped,
and she seemed silently offering up her
prayers and thanksgivings to the
throne of Mercy.

What

What a moment for Alfred; her cheek lay close to his—he envied not the greatest potentates of the earth—he smiled at human grandeur, and fancied no felicity could equal what he experienced in supporting the object of his tenderest affections; he contemplated her, in her interesting attitude, as something above mortality, with sentiments of love and veneration; not an impure idea sullied his soul, but he inwardly determined such a mind and heart as she possessed should never be warped by what the great world styles polite education.

On her recovery from this divine ecstacy of thought she turned her
eyes

eyes on Alfred! How happy you have made me!" she said; he replied not, but impressed a fond kiss on her rosy lips; she did not chide, but returned the chaste salute. I fear some of my fair readers are on the point of closing the book, at the same time deeply blushing for her imprudence; yet, ere they condemn, I beseech them to remember, that Anna was guileless—that she was the child of Nature, and, as such, followed its sacred dictates.

They now joined Lady Malcomb, who had beheld the scene with inexpressible delight, and slowly returned to her unwholesome abode, fearful of discovery

discovery as the day increased. At-
 tended by permission, spent it with them
 in improving conversation, and quit-
 ted at night with regret; on reaching
 his own lonely chamber, not being
 inclined to sleep, he sat down to me-
 ditate on the many amiable qualities
 his much-loved Anne possessed. We
 will now leave him occupied by these
 agreeable reflections, and return to the
 Baron.

LETTER

look over a wide-extended plain
 from the summit of the mountain
 bloody cliffs, or the preceding
 evening, and the light

LETTER X.

from the mountain of light: the
 glow of the sun's light over the walls

HARRY the next morning, the
 Baron, wife, and having refreshed
 himself with a comfortable breakfast
 prepared for him by his kind hostess,
 departed (attended by the blessing
 and prayers of the honest peasants) for
 the Castle, keeping on his diligent
 private duty. He remained all
 that day, towards evening he seated
 himself at the end of the feast: he
 stood a moment, and cast his anxious
 look

look over a wide-extended heath; in vain he strained his aching eyes, no friendly cottage, as on the preceding evening, offered a welcome shelter from the inclemencies of night: the wind howled dismally over the waste, sweeping in short eddies the fast-falling leaves: 'twas bitter cold. The Baron wrapped his tattered cloak about his shoulders, and endeavoured to be content; overcome by fatigue, his trembling feet could ill support his exhausted frame, yet he bent his weary steps back to one of the gloomy recesses in the forest, where, wrapped in his own integrity, he braved the horrors of a long dark night, and at
cool the

the foot of an old oak he stretched his aching limbs, and sunk to rest.

He awoke the next morning much refreshed, and opening his wallet, which had been well stored by the benevolent rustics, satisfied the cravings of nature—then arose and proceeded on his journey over the before-mentioned heath. About one o'clock he perceived the well-known turrets of the Castle, as they rose in solemn grandeur above the embowering woods which shaded that side from the keen northern blasts; with cautious steps he approached, yet scarcely could believe it the same happy mansion he once knew, so desolately gloomy did

it

It took every thing bore the fatal
marks of tyranny and oppression.
The lofty pile was in many parts de-
stroyed by the cruel ravages of war.
No longer was the hospitable board
spread for the needy stranger—no
more did the spacious hall echo the
glorious sounds of innocent merriment—no more did the aged min-
strel tune their harps, or the younger
part of the vassalage beat time with their
feet to the melting strains—no, the in-
struments of harmony lay by forgotten
and unstrung, whilst the wretched
owners retired to some solitary corner
and wept the sad reverse; every face
wore a gloomy, disconsented aspect.
A heavy sigh stole from the bosom of
the

the Baron at the end of the change of his
most noble and brave in the end
peaceful domain.

And thus it was that the Baron

Leaving his back seat, very noble

the wall of the outer court, he endeavoured

to arrange his feet and put

the means by which he intended to

duce himself to the walls of Alfred,

when suddenly his intention was

interrupted by one, who in mild and

gentle accents asked his business,

raised his heavy eyes to the speaker,

and beheld, with indescribable emo-

tions of joy, his much-loved noble

friend Randolph.

—on the other side of the wall, he

He

He instantly discovered himself to the infinite surprise and pleasure of his friend, who long had thought him numbered with the dead: the first effusions of delight over, and mutual congratulations having passed, Randolph conducted his friend to his apartment in the Castle, where being seated, the Baron informed him of Alfred's existence and present place of concealment, likewise the reason which had induced him to take so long and hazardous a journey to the Castle.

Randolph was transported when he heard that Alfred yet lived, and promised

mitted to sound the inclinations of the soldiery that very day, and give him an account of his success at midnight in the neighbouring forest. The Baron then departed, it not being safe for him longer to remain in the Castle.

He reposed himself during the day in an humble shepherd's cot, who, though he toiled hard from the rising of the sun to its setting for himself and family, was yet ever ready to divide his morsel with the needy stranger—what a lesson for the great! A poor unlettered rustic shall feel the miseries of his fellow creatures and humanely assist them even to his own prejudice, while the rich and affluent

turn aside with contempt their heads from the shivering object of distress, who in sounds scarce articulate implores relief.—To debauch a friend's wife, or rob an inexperienced maid of her innocence, which is all her portion, if poor—if rich, all that can constitute her lovely in the eyes of the world, no sum is thought too large. At the gaming table, that source of destructive pleasure and pain, where such numbers constantly repair to prevent *ennui*, or banish disagreeable reflections, with swollen eyes and livid countenances, the fatal consequences of the preceding night's debauch, with what eager desire they view each others gold—what sums they hazard on a die—

die—sums which, if properly expended, would save whole families from ruin, and insure the donor many nights of peaceful repose, and make his bed, instead of thorns, a bed indeed of down; and far from blushing that he is a man, he would glory in being a christian.

At the hour appointed the Baron repaired to the forest, and awaited with extreme anxiety and impatience the arrival of his friend: at length he appeared, accompanied by several officers and great men, who one and all declared they would answer with their lives for the courage and fidelity of Alfred's conquered vassals, they having

long meditated a revolt against the tyranny of Malcomb, and if headed by their much-loved Lord, they had no doubt of conquering in their turn, and reinstating in his possessions Alfred, the rightful heir.

It was then agreed that Randolph should on the following night secretly leave the Castle, and in company with the Baron depart on fleet horses for Alfred's place of concealment; taking with them one for his use, and that at a time and place appointed they would meet their beloved Lord with all the troops under their command. Having previously terminated the existence of the wretch placed by Malcomb as

Governor of the Castle, and die or release their beloved lady from captivity: having thus settled their plan, they separated.

Every thing happily coinciding with their utmost wishes, the Baron and his friend departed on the following night with all speed, and in the short space of thirty hours arrived at the Rock which concealed Alfred, and found him musing on his beloved Anna.

With tears of unfeigned joy he embraced his friends, who having returned his affectionate caresses with equal sincerity, prepared to inform

H 3

him

him of every thing that had happened since his departure from the Castle with his father. But language is inadequate to describe his grief and rage on hearing his revered mother was become a prisoner in the Castle of Malcomb.

It was long, very long before either the Baron or Randolph could calm his transports; at length they succeeded, entreating him not to give way to despair, but hasten with them to join his army, who would be all ready to receive him.

Alfred again embraced them, related his adventure in the Cave, and

and concluded by saying, he would go and inform the Countess and her daughter of the present state of affairs, as he could not think of quitting his asylum unless accompanied by them.

So saying, he flew to Lady Malcomb, and after apprising her of the before-mentioned particulars, he concluded by assuring her, he found it impossible to quit the place unless she would consent with Anna to accompany him.

Anna threw herself at her mother's feet, joining her entreaties with those of Alfred, in hopes to induce her to compliance—"For my sake, at least,"

H 4

cried

bried the amiable girl, "quit this dismal abode, where you have experienced nothing but misery."

After much hesitation she at length yielded to their joint sollicitations, though greatly debilitated by grief and long confinement.

He then introduced his two friends, who were received by them with great affability. After some debate, it was at length agreed that they should all set off on the subsequent day; and for the greater security and ease of Lady Malcomb and her daughter, they should be conducted to the lone cottage of Alfred's nurse in the forest.

Early

Early on the following morning they mounted their horses and departed; Alfred supporting before him with all the tenderness of a son the drooping Lady Malcomb, whose fragile form shook like the tender reed with every breath of wind, and about noon arrived at the good old couple's hospitable dwelling.

The honest woman's joy was excessive on beholding Alfred, and she promised to contribute all in her power to the ease and comfort of her unfortunate guests, and immediately set about preparing a bed for the dear Lady, who "alack-a-day, poor soul," she said, seemed much exhausted,

indeed quite overcome by the fatigue she had endured in riding, though on so short a journey she had fainted several times.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

BY the kind assistance of Alfred, Lady Malcomb was conducted up a narrow pair of stairs into a small neat chamber, where the good woman having assisted Anna to undress her, gently placed her aching frame on the bed, where she shortly after sunk into a profound and peaceful sleep.

Anna descended, and with ineffable delight informed Alfred of the present calm state of her beloved mother.

Having all in silence partook of an humble repast, Alfred arose and attempted to bid her farewell, but grief choaked his utterance, and he could only press her hand to his lips: she, on her part, was scarcely less agitated; sighs and tears were for some time their only language. His friends, seeing his situation, reminded him of the duty he owed his mother, and expecting people whose happiness depended on his presence. He thanked them, and throwing his arms round Anna's neck, pressed her to his beating bosom, and imprinted on her rosy lips an ardent kiss. Then turning, said in an hurried accent, he was ready to depart.

He

He had reached the cottage door, when Anna suddenly caught hold of him, and sinking at his feet, begged him to hear and pity her.

“O Alfred!” cried she, in tremulous accents, lifting up to him her fine blue eyes beaming with sensibility—
 “Alfred, if in the day of battle you should meet Lord Malcomb, spare him, oh spare him! for my sake, cruel as he has been, yet still is he my father, and never can Anna wed the man who has imbrued his hands in her father’s blood.”

Alfred raised her, and again tenderly embraced her, promising to do every thing

thing in his power to preserve her parent; adding, he would endeavour to merit by his actions the supreme felicity of one day calling himself her happy husband!

Rushing out of the door to conceal his feelings, he hastily mounted his horse and departed with all speed: yet ever and anon he turned his head, casting a longing look at the little peaceful white cottage as it faded in his sight—it was now lost. A silent tear stole down his cold pale cheek, and fell on the saddle like a drop of wintry rain; he brushed it indignantly away—alas! in vain, another fell—it was the tribute of a faithful, affectionate heart,

heart to the memory of a beloved and amiable object, of whom perhaps he had taken a final farewell. His friends perceiving his situation, and respecting his sorrows, kept at an awful distance; they were sacred, consequently ought not to be interrupted.

Within a few miles of the Castle he was met by his numerous vassals, who welcomed his return with loud shouts of joy: each pressed forward in hopes to gain a better view of their beloved young Lord, who, notwithstanding his heart was wrung with anguish, smiled complacently on all.

Having

Having reached the reception hall, he ascended a small throne, and having thanked his vassals for the unfeigned joy and affection they had expressed at his return, he then, in a short but eloquent speech, set forth the numerous cruelties they had suffered from the tyrant Malcomb since the decease of their Lord, whose loss he sincerely lamented; with extreme pathos he expatiated on the hard fate of their honoured Lady, his mother, a captive in the Castle of such a monster; what miseries must she not have experienced. Heaven only knew what her sufferings were at the present moment—his tongue faltered, his lips quivered, he paused, and strove to
stifle

stifle his emotions, but it would not do; an unbidden tear stole down his cheek—a sympathetic drop fell from the eye of the veteran, while the younger part of the assembly sobbed audibly: at length, combating their agitation, they one and all exclaimed, at the same time throwing their caps aloft, “We will revenge ourselves on the tyrant—we will die, or release our beloved Lady. Lead us on, brave, noble Alfred—Victory or Death!” then bowing low, retired to prepare every thing in readiness for their expedition.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

